AN EPISTLE

FROM THE

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

HELD IN

PHILADELPHIA,

BY ADJOURNMENTS FROM THE ELEVENTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH TO THE FIFTEENTH OF THE SAME, INCLUSIVE.

1863.

PHILADELPHIA:
T. ELLWOOD CHAPMAN,
NO. 5 SOUTH FIFTH STREET.

AN EPISTLE

From Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, held by adjournments from the eleventh day of the Fifth Month to the fifteenth of the same, inclusive, A. D. 1863, *to its members.*

Beloved brethren and sisters:

We believe the day loudly calls for greater faithfulness and dedication of heart amongst us as a people—therefore we feel concerned to address you at this time, to stir up the pure mind by way of remembrance, of the duty we owe to our Heavenly Father, and one to another.

We have been favored in this our annual assembly with the overshadowing presence of the great Head of the church, clothing us from sitting to sitting with the spirit of prayer for the preserva-

tion of all our members, both absent and present, in this day of trial and proving. Well do we know, that nothing short of the power of God will be able to keep us on every hand—and that He, only, can qualify us for any good word or work which will redound to his glory and honor, and promote the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth. It is only as instruments in his holy hand that our labors can hasten the day when the "swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks—when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The acknowledged neglect in the attendance of our religious meetings has renewed a desire for more of the aboundings of that love which was so conspicuous in the days of our worthy predecessors—which drew them together amidst persecutions, and imprisonments, and confiscation of property to wait upon and worship the Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth—which strengthened them to withstand the many temptations they were surrounded with—to return good for evil—blessing

for railing—and even to lay down their lives for the support of the righteous testimony of Peace. "On earth peace, good will toward men."

We have been instructed at this time to view our Yearly Meeting in the position of a parent to all its members, designed to watch over them for good. And, in looking around, we have beheld many states and conditions needing the helping hand, to bear them up in this day of treading down and laying waste some of our precious testimonies.

May those who are fathers and mothers in the church, as also in families, watch over the dear children in all tenderness and parental affection; manifesting toward them that love which unites heart to heart, and establishes a reciprocal freedom and confidence—thus to manifest, in their labors with them and exercises on their behalf, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" and that they may wait for the return of those who have wandered, or meet them on their way returning, and receive them with joy and gladness of heart. Though

many may have gone astray from the flock, either enamoured with pride and vanity, or captivated with the pastimes and amusements of the day, or by whatever allurement they may have been enticed—(for many precious sons and daughters have been captivated)—and, though on account thereof, many hearts are sad and mourning in loneliness, yet, may these remember, the command is given, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good."

We are concerned to encourage all our members, especially our dear young friends, to increasing diligence in the attendance of our religious meetings, (mid-week meetings, as well as those held on first days;) for we feel that it is, indeed, now a time when we need the aid of one another's spirits to enable us to bear the portion of trial meted to many who go mourning on their way, strewing their tears in secret before the Lord. And some of these, like Rachel, are weeping for

their children, and refuse to be comforted because they are not.

May we, dear friends, draw near together, and rally to the standard of Truth. Let us, in all humility, obey the word that is nigh in the heart, and in the mouth. Then shall we know an establishment upon the immutable Rock, and be able to stand unmoved amidst all the conflicting elements, and, in our midst, will greater purity and consistency appear. Then shall we be strengthened to encourage one another in love—to advise and persuade the indifferent and lukewarm, rather than to censure and reprove—to manifest that the motive by which we are actuated, is the welfare of society, and the greatest good of all its members.

And we would affectionately advise, that Friends educate their children within the pale of our own society—believing a benefit would arise thereby—instead of educating them at schools in which are taught many things at variance with our profession. May parents also be renewedly awakened

to the importance of home education; that at a tender age, influences may be thrown around our precious children, favorable to their growth in the Truth, and to their becoming prepared, in after life, to support the testimonies so dear to the Society. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Our hearts have been drawn toward the young men, with fervent desires that there may be found not a few of these who are willing to become soldiers of the cross of Christ. The Church has need of you. Be ye persuaded to enlist under the banner of the Prince of Peace. Take "his yoke upon you—and learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

And of those who have been drawn aside, we would say to the parents:—deal tenderly with the young men, that you may restore and reclaim, rather than scatter and alienate. Let not your care and counsel be lessened, till they

are brought again into the fold. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain."

In conclusion, our sympathies have extended to all our fellow members, and we have desired that all, everywhere, may take fresh courage and persevere in the way of well-doing, having faith that, as our day is, so shall our strength be. If faithfulness is abode in, and our eye (as a united body,) is kept single to the Light, we believe that we shall arise in greater consistency and occupy the position embraced in the injunction of our Divine Master: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

And now, dear brethren and sisters, farewell! We commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them

which are sanctified. In the love of the gospel, we remain your friends.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the Meeting.

WILLIAM GRISCOM,
MARY S. LIPPINCOTT,
Clerks.

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